/219 cont./

588 Marriages which oppose the bilateral extension of the law of incest are criticized and are prohibited, and anyone who contravenes this law is automatically placed outside society.

589 793 Unmarried men are few, and, they say, only the priest practices celibacy.

165 The number of persons of advanced age is very small among the Sanemá. Among the Nabudub we saw only one old man.

753 In the majority of cases, sickness has a magical cause and the theurgists attempt to cure those who are within their field of action. We did not penetrate into this intimate sphere of Sanemá culture and the little that we heard is set forth in the section which deals with religious and magical aspects of these Indians.

764 159 We were not present at any funeral among the Sanemá, but our young informant of the upper Erebato told us in great detail about the death of his father.

159 753 825 763 He had gone out to the forest. There he had found an eagle. As eagles are men, they may only be killed if they are enemies of one's pueblo. The father asked the eagle whether he was a Waica or a Sanemá, and, when it answered that it was a Waica, the Sanemá man killed it with his arrow. Naturally he observed all the taboos that are obligatory for a hunter who kills an eagle. A few days later he became sick. He had a very high fever and remembered that when he picked up the eagle he got the impression that it was feverish, and, as birds of prey are often sent by a theurgist of neighboring enemies in order to kill the people, that explained everything. There was no reason to look for any other cause, the diagnosis was clear, the eagle had transmitted its sickness to the hunter. He became worse as the days went by and /220/ finally died; but he had first explained to the members of his family the cause of his sickness and the reason for

159 his certain death.

764 Immediately after the death, the whole family burst into tears and began to shout; meanwhile several men went in search of the material necessary for raising the corpse. For this there is needed a quantity of stakes and leaves with which a sort of cylindrical coffin is made, and, after the dead person is placed

/221 cont./

765 775 that rises the nonmaterial part of the man ascends, his hikula and his soul and possibly something else which we do not yet understand. On occasion the owner of the hĩkula can be heard as he comes whistling to carry the hĩkula of the dead man to the place where all the others are to be found.

765 [276] [758] The men take great quantities of yopo and dance around the fire which relentlessly consumes the bones. They sing and dance all night long, while the relatives cry out against their neighboring enemies. The ceremony comes to an end in the morning, at which time the sablĩ pulls out the bones in order to pulverize them in a gourd.

[266] The gourd, covered with a leaf and containing the ashes which will be consumed in a broth of bananas during the forthcoming feast of the dead, is kept inside his house by a relative.

121 771 Our knowledge of the religion and mythology of the Sanemá is insufficient, for in order to study the supernatural world of a tribe it is necessary to know the culture thoroughly, since the latter, in multiple activities, is a reflection of the former, and, furthermore, to enjoy the absolute confidence of the Indian so that he may expose without subterfuge everything that may be of interest to the researcher. Nevertheless, taking as a point of departure the data which we were able to obtain and those which have been published by various authors of unquestionable reliability, we dare to take up the matter of the religious life of the Sanemá, because, despite the fact that there are many traits similar to those of the other subtribes of the Yanoama, in general there stand out certain specific elements which will give us a better understanding of the metaphysical world of the Yanoama.

[184]

793 756 791 Yanoama society seems to have three theurgists or religious practitioners, but each one belongs to and officiates in a different supernatural sphere.

793 776 The first of the three is the hɛwĩawán, or the priest, who is the intermediary between the human community and Omao. He belongs to the pueblo which he represents as much as he does to the court of Omao. He lives in both worlds and frequently changes residence.

/221 cont./

793 [776 621] Since the Sanemá people cannot exist in good conditions without the continued and intimate contact with the house of Omao, sáiyawan, the priest makes himself indispensable in the grouping of a band, whose very existence is perpetuated in large part by the quality of the priest.

The hɛwīawán of the Sanemá devotes himself exclusively to filling his high office. For this reason he cannot work, or hunt, or fish, etc. like a common man, and he lives on the benefactions given to him by the community as compensation for the services which he renders to it.

/222/ In his frequent flights between the earth and heaven he commonly kills a vulture or sparrow hawk and that explains why he often returns with his mouth covered with blood, bringing some cashew birds and, on certain limited occasions, even a human leg, trophies which he obtained as he killed the enemy (23).

23. It is likely that all this represents the ideal habitus rather than the real one of the priest.

793 773 Before discussing the nature of the power of the hɛwīawán, we shall first narrate the genesis of the first hɛwīawán of the Sanemá, which will explain to us how it comes about that the hɛwīawán is able to fly and why he always goes about raised some 30 centimeters from the ground when he is on the earth.

There was a man who one day went into the forest to hunt. There he was met by a Great Jaguar, omaukõhe, who is a gigantic jaguar, master of the other felines, and who goes about in an upright position like a man. The jaguar caught the man and ate all his flesh, leaving the skeleton picked clean but without breaking a single bone. The man remained alive and asked the Great Jaguar to give him other flesh. The Jaguar gave him other flesh, but told him that henceforth he would be hɛwī (bat). [825] And from that time on the man hɛwīawán is also a bat. He is a very timid man; children love him very much, because he never gets angry and does not scold. When he is in the company of men, he spends his time singing songs, wásámo songs, which

/222 cont./

793 the men learn because of the frequency with which he sings them.
773 He sings during the day, but especially at night. Suddenly he
[776] interrupts his song and flies up into the sky, where he joins other hɛwĩawán in order to sup with Omao.

793 The hɛwĩawán must jealously keep a certain number of
784 taboos, and on the degree of care with which he keeps them depends, not only his power as a priest, but also the existence of
[262] all his people. Thus, for example, he must not eat crabs or other animals which in reality are men to them, just like eagles, etc.

[778] Should he do this, the "weight of the dead" kills his hikuladɛ, a disaster which, in turn, causes the death, not only
[726] of the priest, but also of a large part of his congregation. For the same reason, the hɛwĩawán never takes part in war or in any combat whatsoever, because, although he is invulnerable and no arrow or club can kill him, his hikuladɛ could not bear the "weight" of a man killed by his weapons. This is the reason why each Sanemá local group relies on a special chief for wartime.

793 The hɛwĩawán, who belongs to the court of Omao more than
[776] to the Sanemá community, does not marry a specific woman.
[836] He may have sexual relations with all the unmarried women of the group, but he is completely unconcerned about them and the children. He has no duties as either husband or father.

/223/ If a hɛwĩawán dies, any woman of the group may
[776] have a son predestined to be a hɛwĩawán. No one knows which
[781] of the boys born in the period immediately after the death of a priest may be the hɛwĩawán of the future, but one day the true hɛwĩawán will return from the forest where he has met the Great Jaguar, who changed him into a priest, replacing his human flesh with other flesh more worthy of his bones, the flesh of a bat-priest.

[771] He than informs the people of what has happened, and, as that election happens shortly after the death of a priest, the new hɛwĩawán tries to take the vacant place in time, assuring, in this manner, the continuation of uninterrupted contact which the Sanemá have had with Omao generation after generation.

/223 cont./

776 The Great Jaguar has certain relations with Omao, the
● 793 deified hero of the Sanemá, since his name, "Omao-kóhe," indicates such a relationship, and it is possible perhaps to speak of a vocation for the office of priest, since the Sanemá Supreme Being admits him, after his encounter with the Great Jaguar, into the court of Omao.

793 According to South American ethnology, it is surprising
171 to find a "specialist" in a nomadic preagricultural society, but, as we shall state below, this is the second time that we have found a similar case in Venezuela; the other one was that of the Warao wiʃiráto.

793 The Sanema priest is a member of the court of Omao, not
776 only because the Great Jaguar changed him into a bat, but also
778 because Omao gave him a hikuladɛ which is invisible, although it has a spherical shape like a ball, and the larger the hikuladɛ, the more powerful the priest.

The hikuladɛ of the priest, the informant explained, is like a globe which the hɛwĩawán keeps in his chest. We shall also see later that the other religious practitioner of the Sanema has a hikuladɛ too, but one which is essentially different. We
793 have the impression that the hikuladɛ of the priest contains "the
778 souls" of the ancestors who were destined by Omao to live there
775 and help the priest. Since the data obtained are, in our opinion,
793 insufficient, we do not want to hazard peremptory statements,
778 but it seems certain that the Sanemá priest also cures the sick,
755 particularly those who are suffering from fever. Our informant
[114] explained to us that the ancestors (hikula-dĩb), the people of the
[775] hikuladɛ of the priest, are the ones who cure the fever when the priest brings the hikuladɛ out of his chest and deposits it for a time on the body of the patient.

Sometimes the desired effect is not attained, and that indicates that the soul of the /224/ victim has already abandoned the
793 body and does not want to return. The hʃkula therefore constitute
778 a sort of supernatural "little pueblo" /pueblecito/ within the
628 Sanemá community in which the priest lives and do not wish to have any communication with the kʃkula-dib /sic/ of the neighboring pueblo. The priests from nearby pueblos do not visit each

/224 cont./

793 778 628 [776] other, for they would begin to fight each other until one of them lay inert on the ground, exhausted and overcome. But they do not kill each other. Only in the house of Omao may all the hɛ̃wĩawán gather with their hĩkula-dĩb.

793 778 775 The hĩkula-dĩb of a priest act exclusively in his rancheria, in other words, in the rancheria of the priest who figures in the house of Omao as the representative of his particular terrestial community, and for this reason more than one priest is unnecessary. In the section of the illustrations[1] one can see the 532 hikuladɛ̃ of a priest, drawn by one of our informants. One sees 793 there five hĩkula-dĩb, or souls of ancestors of the group in which 778 the priest acts. The uppermost figure represents fever. In the 775 center one can see a quadrangular figure which is a house. One 126 of the beings who is inside it is the priest, but what can be seen on the left side is a coleopteran, a scarab. Under the house is seen the heart of the priest.

The informant, after having drawn the figure, insisted emphatically that we tear it up, and he suffered some anguish for having given it to us. After several days had passed, I took him the drawing in order to ask for more details and found him 532 calm and unworried. The reason for suffering this anguish is 793 based on the belief that a Sanemá must never speak of the insect 778 of the house of the hikuladɛ̃. As a matter of fact our informant 775 never mentioned its name. I identified the insect as a scarab 126 on the basis of the descriptions that he gave us and because it 825 was not the first time that I had heard the scarab or other coleopterans mentioned as a supernatural being in South American ethnology.

171 Such is the belief of the Lengua of the Gran Chaco, who 773 affirm that the Great Scarab created the universe and peopled it 825 with spirits and men. The Toba, also of the Chaco, call it payak, 778 a name which means spirit; and it is interesting with regard to the hĩkuladɛ̃ of the Sanemá priest to note the Mataco custom of attributing a supernatural power to a maraca /gourd rattle/ with sacred beetles (Metraux, 1946d, pp. 350, 352, 353, 367). The similarity between the hikuladɛ̃ of the Sanemá and the "sacred maraca" of many South American tribes is very symptomatic.

[1] [see p. 70 - -Analyst]

/224 cont./

793 The function of the scarab in the curing process is as fol-
755 lows: If the hɛ̃wĩawán wishes to cure a patient, he takes the
825 hĩkula from his chest and places it upon the patient. In order to effect the cure, the scarab opens an invisible hole in the chest of the patient, and the hikuladɛ of the priest enters through there.
[775] /225/ Once within the patient's chest, the hĩkula-dĩb come out of the hikuladɛ in order to combat and bring to the exterior the cause of the sickness. After a while the priest again takes possession of his hikuladɛ, and the treatment is fully successful. The informant did not want to mention the name of the caleopteran or even to talk about it, fearing that if he were to do so and if he were then to become sick, the priest would not be able to cure him, since the insect would not open a hole in the chest of the patient.

793 It is our impression that the priest only cures the ailments
755 that result from the presence, in the body of the sick person,
775 of the soul of a wandering deceased person who has approached the rancherias and whose very presence causes pain.

If we understand that the part of the Sanemá which goes to the house of Omao is the soul, we may say that the priest is concerned with the well-being of the same in the bodies of his companions, and that he represents the actualizing principle between the subject "the soul of the man" and the object "Omao," who enter into communication by means of the inter-
[171] vention of the priest. For the soul, which goes to live in the house of Omao as hĩkula-dĩb, we noted down the name of hɛ̃npĩrtĩb, which essentially seems to correspond in its character to the "bole" of the Waica (Zerries, 1958b).

793 The hɛ̃wĩawán may send a hĩkula-dĩb to a neighboring
775 pueblo in order to cause sickness among its inhabitants, but his
754 primary function is to guarantee the well-being of the souls of his community and to present them eventually to Omao at death.
793 It is interesting in this respect to note that the Surara and Pakidai,
754 subgroups of the Yanoama of Brazil, are of the opinion that
825 sicknesses are transmitted by a shaman of a neighboring pueblo
000 by means of sparrow hawks and bats. The Sanemá say that the

/225 cont./ The sanemá say that the
793 hɛwĩawán kills vultures and sparrow hawks on his travels (Becher,
825 1960, p. 96). As we have already explained in another section of this chapter, the Sanemá believe that the eagle and other birds of prey are "men" who can be killed only if they belong to an enemy tribe.

793 The hikulaɛ offers the priest the possibility of flying to the
778 house of Omao. In order that I might understand him better and
[776] not doubt his veracity, the native making the drawing fixed a
[126] propeller to the mysterious sphere. One might say that the
[775] hɛwĩawán is carrying the soul of a dead person to the house of Omao.

756 The second religious practitioner of the Sanemá is a shaman, who is called sablí. The supernatural world over which he has power is different from the world of the priest, and therefore his function is different from that of the former.

[533] In order to become a shaman, the candidate must submit to a very rigorous training under the guidance of an old sablí who knows how to sing the "Great Kɛɛ."

756 /226/ During the period of apprenticeship, which lasts
276 several weeks, the candidate takes yopo continually through a
262 tube or simply with the hand, eats very little and only the food
515 prescribed; he does not bathe and almost does not speak. Among
123 the Waica of the Upper Orinoco I saw a group of these candidates who gave me a depressing impression since they showed prolonged suffering as a result of the consumption of the drug. We were not able to speak with them, and we were not allowed to take blood samples from them as we did with the other members of the rancheria.

756 It seems that all the men are potentially sablíes, but
533 among them there are some who are very strong and others who
774 are weak, and only the strongest ones are able to sing the "kɛɛ" well. This song is rendered by the sablí at the end of his period of instruction, when the candidates are prepared and ready to receive the hĩkulas, or "specific vital principles" of the species of flora and fauna, with the exception of fish. As soon as they hear the call of their master, they obey and go toward his locality, where they find the sablí candidate waiting for them to enter his

/227 cont./

773 774 The Sanemá became discouraged in the face of the ferociousness of the monster and feared the day on which Chinanídmawan would again mistreat and kill them.

773 774 756 In those days there lived among the Sanemá a great sablf, very famous and extremely powerful, who began to think of how he could free them from this demon. The great sablf went off to the forest, and there he found a liana which seemed very suitable for his purposes. He cut a piece of the bejuco and returned. During the night he went to the house of Chinanídmawan in order to surprise him while he was asleep surrounded by his horrible trophies. In fact he did find him in a deep sleep; the sablf then introduced a piece of the liana up his anus. The demon woke up startled. He realized that a powerful sablf had found the means of killing him. In fact, shortly thereafter Chinanídmawan died, and the Sanemá exposed his corpse to the sun so that the flesh might rot. But because the demon had such tough skin, the flesh dried up and the skin remained intact; they then tried to burn it, but this was impossible, so they flung it into the forest and fled from the place.

773 774 The skin of Chinanídmawan, abandoned in the forest, gained access into the plants, animals, and men. That is why all male human beings, the animals, and the plants have within their bodies a hard and indestructible Chinanídmawan which is called hídkula,

774 [764] The hídkula is that part of the male which remains on earth after his death. When the body of a person is burned, his hídkula, on seeing the black cloud which rises from the fire, joins all the other hídkulas and they remain there for a long time... listening and listening to what comes from the world where men live.

[826] The size of the hídkula of a man corresponds to the measure of his torso, and the larger the hídkula is, the stronger is the person.

[764] [276] During the funeral rites, the men, under the influence of yopo, sing about their gigantic hídkula, and, in order to prove their gigantic strength, /228/ they invite each other to the wasamú, and they squeeze each other powerfully with their arms or with sticks. Among the men, only the priest, hɛwíawan, has no hídkula, because he is already a citizen of heaven.

[193]

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
Sanema



771
789 gesture adequately expresses. The point is that the primitive has not yet clarified his ideas on the exact relationship between cause and effect, between the wish and its realization—which is to say, between will and reality, subjective and objective. Another clear proof of this lies in the attitude towards pregnancy and childbirth, which we had already noticed among Uarema's people.

789 Even the belief in amulets is one aspect of the complete naturalness of the
831 supernatural! Shirian amulets are made from the dust of a dried leaf or piece of wood, wrapped into a tiny parcel inside a banana leaf, and tied round the arm.
[832] Some of these have the power to attract love, if not quite in the same sense as the love philtres of Medieval Europe. It should be borne in mind that what we call love—for us, the cultural refinement of a physical attraction—does not exist for the Indians. For them, nothing is involved but the physiological relationship, together with the satisfaction of fulfilling an individual need, a sharing of erotic excitement and as a result, the future increase of their stock. Thus the phenomenon of 'falling in love' is not present: it is simply the taking of a man, or a woman. There is no courtship, only the act itself. In the light of this it becomes clear that what the Indian hopes for from the amulet is not success in wooing a man or a woman already known and selected, but a happy outcome of all things sexual, upon which so much depends—the woman, the family and the continuance of his race.

789 The amulet is not a 'charm' such as we imagine it: it consists simply of a
757 substance which possesses the required power by virtue of its own nature—not by virtue of our belief in it—in exactly the same way as some vegetable extracts have the power to produce diarrhoea, and others the power to stop it. As a cure for diarrhoea the Indians take something prepared from a liana, which puts a stop to the trouble and restores the system to its normal state. The virtue of this substance and the way in which it acts is no more and no less occult than in the case of the amulet worn to attract success in love. The curative pill disappears into the mouth and its effects are felt elsewhere. The relation between the two regions is no more and no less mysterious than in the case of the love amulet: the human body is just as real, just as complex and just as unknown as the external world and other human beings.

756 The medicine-man is to be found in all Shirian tribes. He is the witch-doctor
● 793 and the physician for all general purposes. His superior is the *lahalle*, a kind of high priest, and a very, very rare bird, who possesses wonder-working powers of an unheard-of degree of effectiveness. Uarema assured me that the *lahalle* at

6: Vinci T-5 (1950) 1959 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18
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Pulipuli—the only one then known to exist—could pick out an assassin from a group of ten men gathered for his ceremonies of exorcism. After a few passes made by the wizard, the guilty man lost his hair at one fell swoop, and was thus unmasked.

Endowed as I was with unimaginable powers, I became the *lahalla*. I was called 'Lahallatuan'. My watch, by the aid of which I could see the passing of the hours, predict the weather, foretell the course of journeys and cure certain ills (by applying it to the affected part) had also been promoted. No longer was it mere medicine-man's magic, but lahalla's magic.

## VI

We were now an integral part of the Samatari tribe and in certain respects their moral leaders. The chief, glorying in his (our) red drawers, gave us the benefit of strange daily discourses in which he seemed to be inviting us to take part in his counsels and share in the planning of tribal activities. I had begun to learn the language, which had already interested me in the Canaracuni days, and was able to reply with a few more or less appropriate words, hoping that they would fit in with what I imagined he was talking about. My efforts were generally crowned with success and everyone shouted with glee at the sight of a white man speaking Shirian.

The world the Indians know, within the limits of their primitive conception, is a boundless forest criss-crossed by rivers and water-courses flowing in every direction. The final destination of these streams is not understood, or even thought of. In the centre of this forest is the tribe itself. Over there are other Indians, known only to few and spoken of from time to time. Somewhere in the same forest there are Indians with beards and clothes, outboard motors and guns—terrible Indians, tall in stature and always bad, angry men: such is the first impression occidentals make on these more apathetic wild peoples. The two of us, envoys of these distant Indians, had shown that we were not such bad men, and not in such a perpetual rage. In all humility and simplicity, we had become part and parcel of the Samatari themselves, and they on their side did not lack a real and disinterested friendliness towards us, as witness the behaviour of the boys, our admirers, who never lost a chance of overwhelming us with their kindness. That I should speak their language was the most wonderful